



## THE LEGEND OF TIMPANOGOS

Many, many years ago, a tribe of fish-eating Indians lived by a beautiful silver lake. The lake abounded in fish and when the Indians caught more fish than they could eat, they dried and stored them for future use. By and by, the tribe accumulated more dried fish than they needed.

Far to the north, there lived another tribe of Indians known as the Nez Perce. They were hunters and were recognized as the richest and proudest tribe. The Nez Perce, like all other Indians, believed in "Manitou", the "Great Spirit". Once a year, the tribe's chief climbed to the top of a very high mountain called the "Great White Throne" to pray to the "Great Spirit".

The chief of the Nez Perce had a son named Timpanac. Timpanac's mother died while giving birth; leaving the chief alone to raise his son.

Timpanac became an expert climber. Since his early childhood, he accompanied his father each year on the annual climb to the summit of the "Great White Throne".

One year, there was no rain and no snow; leaving many of the Nez Perce to die from famine. The chief was too ill to make the journey to the "Great White Throne", so Timpanac went alone to pray to the "Great Spirit". While praying, Timpanac was told to go far to the south where a tribe of fish-eating Indians would be glad to sell him food. With a number of ponies loaded with rich furs, Timpanac began his journey southward.

After many days of travel, Timpanac came to the silver lake and found the tribe of fish-eating Indians. He was invited into the chief's wigwam, and there he made his errand known. The chief treated Timpanac kindly and was willing to exchange dried fish for the rich furs.

Large skins divided the chief's wigwam into two rooms. Through a hole in one of the hides, Timpanac saw a beautiful Indian maiden in the other room. She was Ucanogos, the chief's daughter.

When Timpanac was ready to return home, he gave Ucanogos a beaded head band that had been made by his mother. Ucanogos in return gave him a pair of gloves that she had made. As his journey brought him to the crest of a distant hill, Timpanac looked back upon the dimming horizon to see a hand waving farewell.

Soon the time came when Ucanogos was old enough to marry. So that Timpanac might have an opportunity to win her hand, Ucanogos asked her father to conduct a contest for all those braves who wished to marry her. With her father's consent, Ucanogos sent a runner to tell Timpanac to come to the silver lake when the pussy willows bloomed and to bring twenty fat ponies. Word of the contest was also sent out to the other tribes.

Ucanogos went to the river every day and banked snow around the pussy willows, so that they wouldn't bloom before Timpanac could arrive. The time soon came when the snow began to melt. Each day, Ucanogos would look to the north in search of Timpanac and his ponies.

A Sioux, a Cherokee, a Navajo, and a Ute brave came; each with the twenty ponies required to participate in the contest. Timpanac was the last brave to arrive, but his ponies were so thin that all of the other Indians laughed.

Ucanogos wanted to marry the Nez Perce brave and found fault with all of the other contestants. She didn't like the Sioux because he was too fat, the Ute was too thin, and the Cherokee was too lazy.

The contestants were first asked to demonstrate their endurance by running around the great silver lake. Half way through the race, the Sioux pushed the Navajo into the lake and allowed him to drown. Back at the chief's wigwam, the Sioux blamed the drowning on Timpanac.

Timpanac was bound and placed in the wigwam while the others decided what should be done with him. While waiting, Ucanogos came to him and cut the cords which bound him. She told him to take the pony which she had waiting and pleaded with him to leave. He explained that to run would appear cowardly, therefore, he must stay. Timpanac then held his hands behind his back as though they were tied. With honor, he awaited the decision of the chief.

The chief came into the wigwam and announced that Timpanac was to be killed. Timpanac then stepped forward and declared that the "Great Spirit" had freed him from the cords which had held him bound. No one dared to come forth and harm him.

The next day, the contestants were told to demonstrate their ability to support a wife by going out to hunt for food without any weapons. The Ute hunted long enough to get a rabbit, and then returned to inform the chief that it had been the Sioux who had drowned the Navajo. The Sioux returned a short time later with a turkey. Timpanac had been gone three days and had killed an animal so large that he couldn't carry it. Men from the tribe were sent to bring back the buffalo which was large enough to feed them all.

The contestants' final instructions were to climb to the top of a high mountain where Ucanogos would be waiting. The first to reach her could claim her as his bride. Ucanogos was confident that Timpanac's great climbing skills would bring him to her first.

The race was to begin with the rising of the moon, but the Cherokee and the Sioux started sooner. When Timpanac got to the narrowest place on the mountain, his opponents were waiting for him. Wrestling him to the ground, they then threw Timpanac over the edge of the mountain. His body was broken, and his spilled blood formed a lake at the bottom of the mountain; a lake which is still there to this day. Praying to the "Great Spirit" to take her as well, Ucanogos threw herself backward across the mountain top. Her features can still be seen along the top of the mountain.

By combining the names of the Indian maiden and her Nez Perce brave, the mountain was given the name "TIMPANOGOS"; a word which means "Sleeping Woman".